THE COMMUNIST REVIEW

June, 1929

★

CONTENTS

The Outlook J. T. M.

A Labour Government will make War A. ROTHSTEIN

Strike Strategy and Tactics T. BELL

On the Lessons of May 1st F. ROBERTS

Vol. 1 No. 6. PRICE SIXPENCE

Buy the

WORKERS' LIFE

If you are a militant worker and want a militant lead

If you want the truth about conditions at home and abroad.

If you want the best pennyworth on sale

OUT EVERY FRIDAY

Obtainable from The Publishers, Workers' Life, 29 Euston Road, London, N.W.1

Subscription rates on application

CONTENTS

	Page
The Outlook: Towards the Grand Coalition. ... *J. T. Murphy*	336
A Labour Government *Will* Make War. *A. Rothstein* ...	351
Strike Strategy and Tactics. *T. Bell*	362
On the Lessons of May 1st. *F. Roberts*	371
Our Monthly Review of Ideas and Books: A Novel of Mining Life that Fails. *Gore Graham* ...	380

¶ All business communications and editorial correspondence to be sent to The Publishers, The Terminus Publishing Co., Ltd., 29, Euston Road, London, N.W.1.

¶ Subscription Rates. Home and Abroad, single copies 6 months —4s. post paid. One year 7s. 6d. post paid.

¶ Bundle Orders. Home and Abroad—12 copies 4s. 6d. post paid, sale or return..

The
Communist Review

No. 6 Vol. 1 June 1929

THE OUTLOOK

Towards the Grand Coalition

THE nearer the General Election comes the more certain it appears that no party will have a working majority over other parties combined. So conscious are the leaders of the Tories, the Liberals and the Labourals of this prospect that for the last eighteen months the leaders of the various parties have made this a subject, not so much of intelligent discussion, as the basis for political bartering. So degenerate have parliamentary politics become that political principles have given place to the Stock Exchange quotations, and the only question is—can you get in? The Liberals are asked by the Labour people: "Why are you putting up candidates to jeopardise the Labour prospects? You can't form a government." The Tories are demanding of the Liberals: "Why are you letting the Socialists in? You can't form a government." Mr. Lloyd George now asks the Tories: "Will you put the Labour Party in?" The Labour Party accuses the Communist Party of splitting the working class vote, and so on.

At the last General Election in 1924 the following voting was recorded:

	Members	*Votes*
Conservatives	415	7,838,225
Labour	151	5,487,620
Liberal	42	2,925,142

Besides these, one Communist was elected and six "independents."

The distribution of the seats in relation to the voting illustrates not only the undemocratic nature of the British electoral system, but also what a gamble the election is. A small change in the voting may turn over a large number of seats. Probably nothing could illustrate better the tenacity of the British ruling

class through the centuries. To find an explanation of the stupid arrangement which to-day has given one member to 19,000 Conservative votes, one member to each 80,000 Liberal votes, one member to 37,000 Labour votes, it would be necessary to trace the history of the ruling class of this country almost a thousand years. Through it all the dominant class has grafted itself into positions and fenced itself round at every step from the growth of popular pressure, and the inequality of the constituencies is one of the measures they have maintained up to now. If seats were distributed proportionate to votes cast then on the last Parliament there would have been 295 Conservatives, 202 Labour and 110 Liberals.

In the lifetime of the Baldwin Government there have been 63 contested by-elections. The Tories lost 15 seats, the Labour Party gained 11 seats, the Liberals gained 2, and "independents" gained 2. The voting showed the following record:

Conservatives	...	...	630,680	votes.
Labour	...	...	567,914	,,
Liberals	...	...	447,834	,,

Comparing the figures with the General Election figures, it will be seen that the Tory vote fell from 48 per cent. of the aggregate to 38 per cent. The Labour vote rose from 34 per cent. to 34.5 per cent. of the aggregate; the Liberal jumped from 18 per cent. to 27.3 per cent.

No one reflecting on these figures can avoid the conclusion that there must have been something extraordinarily flabby in the leadership of the Labour Party that the bitterness of the working class against the Baldwin regime should find its expression in the extraordinary growth of the Liberal vote. The Liberal Party has obviously gained where the Labour Party should have reaped. It is not possible to measure yet the extent of the movement towards support of the Communist Party. There have been no means of testing this by parliamentary means as yet. But one thing is evident, and that is—there is no prospect of the Labour Party having a majority over all other parties.

This is still more evident since the Lloyd George pledge on unemployment. Prior to this the Liberals were losing ground again to Labour. Since March 1st, however, in the five bye-elections, the Liberal vote exceeded the Labour by 39,172 against 37,927. Of course, allowance must be made for the fact that the Labour Party did not contest one seat in this series of five. But

the aggregate for the constituencies fought compared with 1924 show:—

	March, 1929	1924
Conservatives	47,184	72,551 minus 25,000
Liberals	39,172	28,713 plus 10,000
Labour	37,927	33,025 plus 4,800

The close approximation of the Liberal and Labour vote shows that whilst there is a good prospect of a defeat for the Tories, there is no prospect of a Labour Party majority over all other parties. Rather is there the prospect of the Liberals and the Labour Party and Tory Party sharing results more or less equally.

What Parliamentary combinations are possible from such a result? Which appears the most probable? A Tory-Liberal coalition or a Liberal-Labour coalition, or a three-fold coalition? The forms of the coalition may vary. The Tories can hold office without sharing Cabinet psoitions with the other parties, and carry out an agreed programme with Liberals and Labour. The Liberals can be called upon to form the government and do likewise. The Labour Party can do the same. On the other hand, the Coalition can take the form of sharing Government positions among the parties, as in Germany. We will examine the programmes later to see what political plans they have in this connection.

A Labour-Liberal Alliance?

It is now of importance to take note of what the leaders have had to say on these prospects. It was the habit of the Tories to taunt the Liberals with the question—"Will you repeat 1924?" Mr. Philip Snowden, writing in the *Pall Mall Magazine* in 1928 expressed the following view:—

> "Some Parliamentary understanding will be indispensable and the choice will not be determined by the decision of one Party only.
>
> They (Liberals) could try to arrange terms with the Labour Party. *But they would insist on terms, and from their point of view quite rightly.* They might agree to put in a Labour Government on an agreed programme. *That might not be so difficult to arrange,* for a Labour Party which had not a Parliamentary majority could not expect to have the support of other parties for full Socialist measures. *There is enough in common between the programme of the live parties to a legislative programme for three or four sessions which could constitute a real contribution to social and industrial reforms.*

"But the Liberals might go further. They might insist on sharing offices. This would be a different stile to get over.

"It is a situation which has often faced every Parliament in Europe. It is being considered in both Germany and France to-day. There is nothing sinister in open Parliamentary arrangements. Where no one Party has a Parliamentary majority, some arrangement must be made if Government is to be carried on. The British Labour Party will have to deal with such a situation."

Mr. H. N. Brailsford, an erstwhile "Left" leader, writing in the *New Leader*, October 12th, 1928, said:—

"We come now to the difficult question of collaboration with the Liberals.... The Liberals represent a genuine trend of public opinion. We are democrats: need we feel any shame in approaching them, and endeavouring to ascertain by honest and open conference, how far we can usefully march together for three or four years?

"I believe that if we approached them in this way, we could *win their assent not merely to the whole of our international programme,* but even to some distinctively Socialist legislation at home. Their old, unyielding Socialist theory is, as their Yellow Book proves, a thing of the past....

"Let there be then, after the election, an open conference and a treaty which will define a constructive (but, of course, only reformist) policy at home and abroad.

"I would add (though I lay no great stress on it) that if we reach this point, I think we should be wise to go further and offer some seats in the Cabinet to Liberals....

"There remains a possibility which many of us would prefer—to refuse office, and to offer our conditional support to a Liberal candidate."

Mr. G. Lansbury, chairman of the 1928 Labour Party Conference, wrote in the *New Leader,* September 28th, 1928:—

"... it is impossible, unthinkable that there should be a coalition with Lloyd George and his allies in the formation of a Labour Government, *whatever political conditions may prevail next summer after the General Election.*

"The only safe course for our Party to adopt is to keep clear of all discussions, agreements and understandings other than those that are usual between parties in the arrangement of business."

The Liberals, of course, were not silent under this pressure, and just prior to the Labour Party Conference of October last, namely on October 1st, 1928, the leading article of the Liberal *Manchester Guardian* spoke as follows:—

> "This week it is the Labour Party's turn at Birmingham. It is to be hoped that their deliberations will face the situation. Without some sort of unity among the progressive forces, the country will be handed over to Mr. Micawber and the protectionist hordes behind him. I see that Mr. H. N. Brailsford, who was too far left for the *New Leader* which he formerly edited, faces the question and sees the necessity for a progressive understanding."

This appears to have called forth the angry retort of Mr. Lansbury in his opening speech to the Birmingham Labour Party Conference:—

> "... any attempt by whomsoever made to unite our forces with the decadent remains of Liberalism is foredoomed to failure."

After the Conference was over and the programme of the Labour Party, entitled "Labour and the Nation," had been endorsed by the Conference, and disciplinary measures taken against all opponents within the Labour Party and trade unions, matters developed in a contrary direction to that indicated by the prophetic utterance of Mr. Lansbury. The Liberal *Daily News* reviewed in its leading article of July 11th, 1928, the programme of the Labour Party, "Labour and the Nation," as follows:—

> "It is Liberal in spirit, Liberal in its reformist zeal, Liberal in specific remedies; so Liberal indeed that the authors have borrowed unashamedly, without acknowledgment, great blocks of Liberal proposals and Liberal ideas from the now famous Yellow Book, even to the extreme limit of repeating verbal phrases and titular descriptions. But while Liberals may not object to the sincerest form of flattery, they no doubt find it difficult to understand why their slavish imitators should oppose Liberal candidates in every political election with the bitterness and ferocity that should be reserved surely for the real enemies, of social reform and justice."

This cordial approach to the Labour programme is quite complementary to the manner in which the secretary of the Labour Party, Mr. Arthur Henderson, had reviewed the Liberal programme on February 10th, 1928, in the columns of the *New Leader*. Of the Liberal Yellow Book he wrote:—

"The social philosophy it [the Liberal Yellow Book] reveals, is not the historic Liberal philosophy, but one belonging to a different order of political ideas. It is, in fact, the spirit of Socialism and not Liberalism that has dictated the new programme of the Liberal Party.

"There is little in the discussion under the heading 'The Organisation of Business,' with which a Socialist will find it necessary to quarrel.... If they had taken the trouble to examine the Labour plan for re-organising the mining industry as an integral part of the national undertaking of coal, power and transport, they would hardly advance this idea as something novel and different. The Power and Transport Commission proposed in the 'Coal and Commonsense' scheme [Labour Party publication] is precisely the kind of body advocated in the Liberal Report."

Lest it appear that these statements are mere isolated observations and not part of the continuous process of these parties coming together, we will quote further from the articles by Mr. J. A. Hobson, which appeared in the *Manchester Guardian* on February 4th, 6th and 8th, 1929.

On February 4th he wrote:—

"Nor is this agreement upon foreign policy confined to the general outlines of pacific internationalism; upon the immediate outstanding issues of the Anglo-French Pact, 'Freedom of the Seas,' and the evacuation of the Rhineland, the mind of Liberalism and Labour is one."

On the 6th he busied himself with an account of the rationalisation proposals of Labour and of Liberalism, and concluded as follows:—

"Surely we have here a noteworthy approach towards a conception of industrial government that is consonant with the policy of Labour."

Lest there be the idea in the minds of any that nationalisation is the bulwark between Liberals and Labour, let our readers consider the following observations of Mr. Hobson on February 8th, 1929:—

"The declaration of Labour in favour of public ownership of foundation industries, such as land, railroads, power and banking, may seem at first sight a fatal obstacle to co-operation. But is there much substance in it? Labour does not propose to confiscate these undertakings. Its nationalisation would have to be financed by public bond-issues, which, for the most part, would be taken in exchange for the existing share and debenture capital of the

> concerns 'nationalised.' Fixed interest would still have to be paid to the persons who had invested their capital in these undertakings. Would this differ appreciably from the Liberal proposal to leave the ownership of the undertakings intact, but to put them on a fixed interest or debenture basis?"

A detailed comparison of the essential features of Liberal and Labour programmes, "Labour and the Nation," and the Liberal "Yellow Book" confirms these observations.

Nevertheless, speaking on November 4th, 1928, at Huddersfield, Mr. MacDonald delivered himself of the following utterance:

> "The leaders of the Liberal Party said in one breath that it was a most objectionable and deplorable thing that minorities should govern the country, and yet they were appealing to the electors to return forty, fifty or sixty Liberals to the House of Commons, so that, as a matter of fact, they might determine the policy of the Government of the day. The Liberals could not have it both ways, and so far as he was concerned, he was going to be no party to minority Government."

It would appear from this that in the event of the Labour Party being in a minority, it would refuse to form a Government, and refuse to give support to a Liberal minority or a Tory minority Government. If this means anything at all we are driven to the conclusion that at the first opportunity to force another General Election he would do so. But by April 26th, 1929, Mr. MacDonald has changed his mind. Speaking at the Labour Women's Conference, he said:—

> "I want a majority. *I pledge myself not to use parliamentary figures for the balancing of this party and that party for the purpose of needlessly and recklessly plunging the country into election after election.* The only stability that was safe and sure was the stability which will come from a Labour Government established in the House of Commons."—*Daily Herald,* April 26th, 1929.

Of course, everyone can understand that each of the Party leaders wants a majority. But the pledge given in his speech is a repudiation of the former utterance. It is a pledge to some form of coalition with one or other of the parties in one form or another, either as a minority Government resting upon the consent of the Tories and Liberals, *i.e.,* an agreed upon programme of Tories, Liberals and Labour, or the support of one or the other parties.

Mr. J. H. Thomas has settled this question very definitely. Speaking at Wrexham on April 30th, he declared:—

> "If the verdict of this country shows, as I believe it will, that the people are not only sick of the existing Government, but do not trust the Liberal Party, then there is only one course and that is: Mr. MacDonald will be asked—let me add, he will not only be asked, he will accept the responsibility of forming under any circumstances a government."

The Threefold Accord

It is now necessary to extend our investigation to see if there is such an accord between the two parties already examined with the Tory Party to lay the basis of such a coalition as the "Minority Government" proposed by Mr. Thomas. A Minority Government is a form of coalition, because it cannot exist without agreement with a rival party or parties. After Mr. MacDonald's speech at the Albert Hall in which he outlined the Labour Party's policy in the election, Sir W. Joynson Hicks, the Tory Home Secretary, declared:—

> "The speech made by Mr. Ramsay MacDonald on Saturday night was a speech which might have been made by Mr. Baldwin or myself."—*Daily Express.*

On the following Friday (May 3rd) Mr. Lloyd George laid claim to the same speech. He said:—

> "Mr. Ramsay MacDonald denounced it [the Liberal programme] as improvised jazz and he made a speech in the Albert Hall in which he copied every proposal the Liberals made, and copied them very badly.
>
> "If a minister went into a church and heard his own sermon being delivered there, he would be flattered, but if he saw something stuffed in to show it was original, he would be angry. So was I, when I saw Mr. Ramsay MacDonald steal my sermon."—*Daily News,* May 4th.

When the leaders of three "rival" parties all lay claim to the programme speech of one of them there can be little basis of quarrel between them other than the spoils of office.

Mr. J. H. Thomas, speaking in the House of Commons on April 18th, 1929, also made a proclamation of unity between all three parties. He said:—

> "Although there may be, indeed. must inevitably be, party differences on questions of policy, that so far as the unity, the development, and the prosperity of the Empire

> are concerned, there is no really essential difference between any parties in the House. . . . Speaking through this House to the Empire, which is far more important than merely talking Party against Party, speaking for my Party with authority and with knowledge, I say that if the political fortunes in a few weeks' time enable us to take the reins of office—and, as in 1924, it did not result in the disintegration of the Empire—our aim and object in 1929 will not be disintegration, but the consolidation and progress of a heritage of which we are all proud."

This declaration of accord we will now supplement with facts establishing the co-operation of the Tories with Liberals and Labour.

LABOUR

> "The structure of peace and of Labour's policy will then be built upon the foundations of the League of Nations."
>
> p. 44 "Labour and the Nation."

LIBERAL

> In coalition with Tories signed Versailles Treaty establishing League of Nations.

TORY

> In coalition with Liberals was a party to Versailles Treaty establishing League of Nations.

INDIA

LABOUR

> Opposed to Indian independence. Passed Bengal Ordinances (E.P.A.). Sentenced Communist trade union leaders to 4 years for sedition. Raised no protest against shootings of workers or new anti-trade union legislation. Represented by Hartshorn and Attlee on Simon Commission.

LIBERAL

> Opposed to Indian independence. Under Lib-Lab coalition occurred Amritzar massacre. Raised no protest against Tory legislative tyranny and shootings. Gave Simon to lead Tory Commission.

TORY

> Opposed to Indian independence. Responsible for shootings in Bombay strike, 1929. Passed by dictatorial order of Viceroy new anti-trade union bill, arrested 31 workers' leaders for sedition. Established Simon Commission. Indian workers shot in protesting against its arrival in India.

EGYPT

LABOUR

Endorsed 1922 Agreement of Liberals and Tories.

LIBERAL

Liberal and Tory Coalition made 1922. Agreement restricting Egyptian independence and establishing British conquest of Egypt.

TORY

Sent warships to enforce British dictatorship, closed Egyptian Parliament, forbids public meetings or elections.

IRAK

LABOUR

Bombed the Arabs of Irak five times in eight months and continued Tory policy.

LIBERAL

Agreed with Tories.

TORY

Transformed conquest by army to conquest by air force. Mr. Churchill declared it cheaper and more effective.

ARMAMENTS

LABOUR

Rejects total and proportional partial disarmament proposal of U.S.S.R. Supports American Kellogg and Hoover. War preparations in Budget 1924 £105,000,000. Major cost of five cruisers introduced by Labour Government passed on to succeeding budgets. Labour Party has voted for the estimates of Liberals and Tories on all occasions.

LIBERAL

Rejects U.S.S.R. proposals. Supports American Kellogg and Hoover. Budget expenditure on new war developments in coalition with Tories until 1922.

1920-21	£292,000,000
1921-22	£111,000,000

TORY

Rejects U.S.S.R. proposals. Supports American Kellogg and Hoover. Armament expenditure:—

1922-23	£127,000,000
1925	£114,000,000
1926	£114,000,000
1927	£114,000,000
1928	£114,000,000
1929	£114,000,000

NATIONAL DEBT

(Approximate total £7,500,000,000)

LABOUR

Labour agrees to pay £350,000,000 per annum interest on war bond holders.

LIBERAL

Liberals agree with Labour.

TORY

Tories agree with Labour.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE AND RELIEF

LABOUR

Supported and signed by Blanesburgh Commission, Labour Government amended 1921 Act making "genuinely seeking work" clause a statutory condition of unemployment benefit. Agreed to abolish Boards of Guardians and cut relief. Stands for export of unemployed to the Dominions.

LIBERAL

Supported and signed Blanesburgh Commission. Agreed to abolish Boards of Guardians and has cut relief. Stands for export of unemployed to Dominions.

TORY

Appointed Blanesburgh Commission. On basis of this passed new legislation including its recommendations. Abolished Boards of Guardians and cut relief. Stands for the export of unemployed to Dominions.

It would be possible to extend the common platform of these three parties considerably, but sufficient has been given here to show both the absurdity of thinking there is any basic difference between these parties on any question and the idea announced by Lansbury that "a coalition with Lloyd George is impossible." Here we have shown not only the common policy between the Labour Party and the Liberal Party, but also what naturally flows from it—a common platform on all essentials with the Tories. Most certainly the facts here revealed establish completely the superficial character of the Parliamentary differences. Nor is it of any avail to suggest that the Labour Party is not united and that the "left" leaders will push the MacDonalds forward. The Independent Labour Party buried its differences with the Labour Party at the Birmingham Conference. This was evident at the subsequent

I.L.P. National Conference, when according to the *New Leader* of January 18th, 1929:—

> "The Cook-Maxton manifesto was not mentioned once directly."

With this unity Wheatley and Kirkwood marched on the public platform with Henderson and protected themselves with the police. Seventeen workers were arrested at this meeting. Even the Tories could do this. Nor is it useful to suggest that there is still A. J. Cook left amongst them to raise the Red Flag. He has publicly recanted his revolutionary ideas and is appealing for "order and sensible progress" and fawning on the Prince of Wales in a way that leaves J. H. Thomas in the shade. He is now all out for the Labour Government and is as fierce in his denunciation of the Communists as MacDonald himself. It is possible now to speak of a united Labour Party pursuing the course indicated herein.

The coming together of the parties in Parliament is paralleled by a similar process going on outside Parliament. In 1924 the Labour Government appointed a commission under the chairmanship of Balfour to inquire into the reason for the loss of markets and decline in Britain of export trade. Balfour is a Tory. The Commission was composed of Tories, Liberals and Labour and leading bureaucrats of the trade unions, including J. T. Brownlie, of the Engineering Union, and Cramp, of the Railwaymen. This Tory-Liberal-Labour Commission has issued its final report and recommendations. This report calls for direct State leadership in order to carry through the re-organisation of capitalist industry, to raise it to a higher competitive level. The measures recommended include State credits, to the industrialists, cutting down of staffs following upon trustification, speeding up and levelling wages. It demands the "fullest co-operation between all grades of workers and the management in the effort to realise the greatest possible economies in the service, even if this involves changes of customary methods which at first may be unwelcome."

> "Public authorities should also, so far as practicable, fix their rates of wages by reference to the market conditions observed by good private employers for the corresponding grades of labour."
>
> p. 93 "Final Report of the Balfour Commission."

This is neccessary, they say, "because an appreciable rise in the real cost of public services may have a reaction on the costs of export industry."

Wage reductions are evidently to be the order of the day. The employers are to get the State aid, the workers get the wage cuts. It is also agreed that the carrying through of the rationalisation plan will mean "for a time" more unemployment.

The publication of this document signed by Tories, Liberals and Labour and trade union leaders coincides with the publication of what is known as the Melchett-Turner Report. This report consists, as the *Daily Herald* declared, in the "Demand for State Aid to Help Industry to Recover." This document also declared that rationalisation would "for a time" mean more unemployment. It also was endorsed by the General Council of the Trades Union Congress. The *Times*, the Tory paper, appreciated the report. It said in its issue of March 13th, 1929:—

> "It is a real service to know that in their industrial capacity the trade union leaders on the conference are willing to take so hopeful a view of capitalism."

Mr. MacDonald in the *Daily Herald*, March 14th, 1929, said he "welcomed the proposals as being of very great assistance in the propaganda of the point of view and the demands that had been reiterated with so much insistence by the Labour Party." The Liberals welcomed the report as the dawn of a new day.

When, therefore, we view the situation as a whole, the question of which party—Liberal, Tory or Labour—holds office, has no point whatever from the standpoint of the working class. There exists even before the election takes place a *grand coalition of three parties pledged to the hilt and practising in their various spheres of influence, inside and outside Parliament, all that follows from such a coalition.* Whichever Party takes office after the election by whatever combination of forces, the programme is capitalist rationalisation, imperialist expansion, war budgets, trustification, and ever and always the deeper and more intense exploitation of the workers. Turn the pages of every report of the Commissions upon which the Labour Party has been represented from 1924 to this day, and never once is it possible to find a single reference to the exploitation of the workers. Not once is it possible to find a protest against the robbery of the working class of more than three-fifths of the wealth they produce. Inside and outside Parliament the grand coalition of Tories, Liberals and Labour, industrial magnates, finance capitalists, trade union bureaucracy is established.

Need there be any surprise, therefore, when a Conservative like Lord Hugh Cecil, writing in the *Sunday Express* on March 17th, 1929, says:—

> "Is there any difference, going beyond method or degree of change, between the plans of official and respectable Labour and those of Conservatives or Liberals?
>
> "Mr. MacDonald and Mr. Baldwin wish to keep society as it is, though with improvements about the method of which they differ."

But, continues this Lord, on the issue of the class struggle or advanced socialism: "Mr. Baldwin, Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. MacDonald" are all "on the one side." His additional observation clinches the argument:—

> "The arrangement of parties is so constructed as to prevent this issue being fought and to bring forward instead the subordinate controversies about ways and means in achieving the common objects of all three official parties."

Conclusions

Our examination of the position of the three parties, Tory, Liberal and Labour, has reduced the question of which party shall form the Government to a very incidental question. It is no longer of any more importance to the working class than the old question of Tweedledum or Tweedledee. We have now Tweedlethree. On questions of principle there is *no difference* between the three parties. On the question of the method of developing British imperialism at the expense of the working class of this country and the millions of colonial workers and peasants there is a closer approximation of the Liberals and the Labour Party. How superficial are the differences even of method from those of the Tory Party has been demonstrated over and over again. It is only a question of degree of hypocrisy and cant employed to achieve the same end.

The sure and certain outcome of the election is a Government supported by all three parties to carry on the "King's Government" along the path of imperialism, war preparation, capitalist nationalisation and capitalist dictatorship and thus inevitably to increased instability. It is this fact, more important than contemplating the Parliamentary shufflings of office bearers, that is a complete justification and reason for the Communist Party's challenge on all fronts with its programme, "Class against Class." It is the abandonment of all forms of struggle by the Labour Party and trade union bureaucracy against capitalism, and the completeness of their subordination to capitalism and the demands of the capitalist class, that makes the Communist Party stand out so clearly as the custodian of the class interests of the workers. The

surrender of the Labour Party and the trade union bureaucracy brought to its completion by the General Strike of 1926 does not and cannot eliminate the class war which is inseparable from capitalist society. On the contrary, it makes the class war more fierce and drives the working class to search again for a new leadership to lead it in its liberation war against its exploiters.

The dramatic abandonment and betrayal of the workers in May, 1926, was the open proclamation to the working class that a new leadership had to be found. A leadership of struggle can only be found in struggle. Because of this fact the process of finding the new leadership by the working class is not an easy one and only as the class pressure of the capitalists deepens and the workers are goaded into returning again and again to the fray, do the workers forge their new leadership under the banner of the Party which expresses their struggle, understands the meaning of the struggle and aims at the goal which means the triumph of the workers in the dictatorship of the working class. This Party is the Communist Party now standing before the workers as the only party of the working class.

In the General Election of 1929, there can, therefore, be no question of this Party of the class war advising the workers to in any way support anyone of the capitalist parties. They are enemy parties. They are already in coalition against the working class on all fronts. The Communist Party, as the leader of the workers, gives answer on all fronts. Instead of saying to the workers, "Vote Labour and see what they will do—by Parliament," it says, "The working class can get exactly what it has the power to take by its organised might outside Parliament." Instead of putting our faith in a party pledged to capitalism, it says to our fellow workers, let us forge our own class party—the Communist Party. Instead of "capitalist democracy" rely on our own mass might and prepare for a *workers democracy headed by a Revolutionary Workers' Government.* The value of sending a Communist Party representative to Parliament lies in the fact that he goes there not to build capitalist democracy, not to be a "respectable" parliamentarian, but to use it as a platform from which to expose and denounce the robbers, as the means to organise the mass power of the workers outside Parliament. This is the way to answer the capitalist coalition of whatever combination. This way is the way of the Communist Party.

J. T. MURPHY.

A Labour Government *will* make War

By A. ROTHSTEIN

§ 1.—*Illusions*

MANY workers will be found to agree with the Communist Party's criticisms of the Labour Party. They will discover all sorts of excuses, they will plead with the Communists to "give Labour a chance"—but, if pressed, they will admit that there was not a vast difference between the Tory Party and the Labour Party on questions such as intervention in China, "Russian propaganda," strike action against the Trade Union Bill, the Blanesburgh Report, and so on. There are quite a number of "left" workers who will admit that the policy practised by the Labour Party during these years was one of coalition with the Tories, for all their "opposition" in Parliamentary debates. They will even go so far as to say that this coalition policy has increased the danger of war.

But their agreement stops, and their imagination revolts, at the idea that a Labour Government will continue the Tory policy in all essentials. The idea that a Labour Government will be a "rationalisation" government: that it will support the mine-owners against the miners, the police against the unemployed, the officers against the soldiers: the idea that it will use the Emergency Powers Act to coerce the workers in industrial disputes, and send battle cruisers to defend the Empire against the brutal Egyptians—such things seem to them absolutely impossible. "After all there is a limit which even the most moderate Labour leader will not overstep," they assure you. When you remind them of what the Labour Government did in 1924 they eagerly reply that that was a minority government, which had to reckon with the Liberals. As for the idea that a Labour Government could actually declare and carry on an imperialist war it is merely grotesque to them.

When even sincere left-wing workers are in this frame of mind, hoping against hope for "better times under a Labour Government," it is not surprising that the mass of less politically conscious workers should cherish far greater illusions about a Labour Government. It is not surprising that they should fall

an easy prey to the oratory of A. J. Cook, who promises them nationalisation of the mines, peace, steps towards socialism, and a score of other blessings from a Labour Government which less than 12 months ago he would have denounced as lies and trickery of the workers. Furthermore, it would be surprising if these mass illusions had no effect upon our Party. It would be surprising if there were not some Communists whose uttermost conception of a Labour Government is that of a *screen* for imperialist war plans: a puppet which would keep the people amused and interested by a few trumpery reforms and "democratic" gestures, just so long as the warmongers needed to complete their preparations, after which the Labour Government would be unceremoniously brushed aside.

Yet such a theory, like the theory that a Labour Government would usher in a new period of small material concessions to the workers from the super-profits of rationalisation, tending to the peaceful growth of a new Labour aristocracy and a further era of "democratic development," is quite false. More than false, it is extremely dangerous, precisely because the tide in the country is running "left," and there is a real possibility of a Labour Government being formed after the General Election. Our Party will be in great danger if every member does not have fixed and clear in his mind the understanding that a Labour Government to-day will be a government, not of puppets, but of champions and spokesmen of British imperialism anxious, moreover, as newcomers to win their spurs. And such a government will not only prepare an imperialist war, it will organise, declare and wage an imperialist war, if it gets the chance.

§ 2.—*Realities*

Where does the danger of a new imperialist war lie? First, in the class hostility of British imperialism to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Secondly, in the rivalry between declining British imperialism and expanding American imperialism. Let us beware of discussions as to which war must "inevitably" come first. There is an excellent case to be made for British imperialism attacking the Soviet Union first, in order not to leave the flame alight which might explode the powder-magazine of India and Africa just when British imperialism is at death-grips with its rival. Equally there is the chance that America by her programme of naval construction might set a time limit for British imperialism (just as the expanding army programmes of Russia and France set at time limit for Germany in 1913-14), after which

the odds would be too great. But a victorious advance by the proletarian revolution in Europe, or an attempt by Italian Fascism to win new markets in the Balkans or in Africa, might cut across either of these prospects.

All that we can say is that British imperialism, and therefore its political spokesmen, are moving into sharper and sharper antagonism with the Soviet Union on the one hand, and the United States on the other: and that, unless the masses are roused to counter-antagonism against British imperialism, it is a secondary question when this political antagonism will pass into its continuation, war.

Those who stand for capitalist rationalisation in Great Britain stand for repression of the intensified working-class resistance which accompanies every effort of the capitalists to rationalise. They are bound therefore to intensify the struggle against the U.S.S.R., not only as the object-lesson of a growing socialist order of society, but as the seat of the Communist International—that hateful organisation which they find more and more in every factory, in every unemployed struggle, in every working-class street, in every trade union, in the armed forces themselves. Those, again, who stand for the consolidation of the British Empire, those who hold that its maintenance is the common duty of all parties in the British State, must necessarily stand for repression of the intensified colonial revolt which maintenance of the Empire involves, in the changed conditions of the world after the war. They are bound, therefore, to intensify the struggle against the U.S.S.R., not only as an object-lesson to the oppressed colonial peoples of political and economic emancipation of the subject races in a Socialist Republic, but once again as the seat of the Communist International—whose message and leadership Lord Irwin finds challenging his soldiers in the Bombay mills, Lord Allenby his battleships from the fellaheen's huts along the Suez Canal, and Lord Athlone his police in Johannesburg compounds and Basuto villages.

Or take the antagonism to American imperialism. Communist literature during the last 12 months has given very many illustrations of the growing economic headway made by the United States where formerly Great Britain held sway. Let us quote only a few outstanding cases, showing the position in the basic industries and the colonial markets.* In 1900 the U.S.A. produced

* There are others in T. Bell's booklet "Heading for War" (Modern Books, Ltd. 1s.)

approximately the same quantity of coal as Great Britain, in 1913 not far off twice as much, in 1928 more than twice as much. In 1900 the U.S.A. produced twice as much pig-iron, and twice as much steel, as Great Britain; by 1913 it was producing three times as much pig-iron, and four times as much steel: by 1928 it was producing six times as much pig-iron, and nearly six times as much steel.

Similarly with the colonial markets. In 1899-1901 66.7 per cent. of all Indian imports came from Britain, and 1.3 per cent. from U.S.A.: in 1913 64.2 per cent. from Britain, and 2.6 per cent. from U.S.A., but by 1927-8 the British proportion had fallen to 47.7 per cent., and the American had risen to 8.2 per cent. In 1913 16.5 per cent. of China's imports came from England, and 6 per cent. from America: by 1926 the proportion had been nearly reversed (16.8 per cent. from U.S.A., 8.6 per cent. from England). In Latin-America, Great Britain had 5,000 million dollars invested in 1913, which had grown to 5,200 million dollars in 1928. But U.S. investments had grown during the same period from 1,248 million dollars to 5,200 million dollars: in 1928, out of a total of £65,000,000 borrowed by the governments of Latin-America, £60,000,000 came from the United States: and the latter supply Latin-America with 67 per cent. of its imports to-day, as compared with 40 per cent. before the war.

Those who stand for the maintenance of the British Empire stand for the maintenance of its hold on world markets. They are bound, therefore, to be roused to greater and greater anxiety by the tremendous inroads of America. They are bound to reply with counter-measures when the American imperialists extend the struggle into the political field, by such measures (all coming within 1928) as a big naval construction programme, the Kellogg "peace offensive," the ostentatious American offer of a Treaty of Arbitration to Egypt, over the head of Great Britain, and the equally ostentatious visit to Dublin by Secretary Kellogg, who "had no time" to visit London. And part of the counter-measures are the "shadow wars" already waged in 1928 and 1929—the Bolivia-Paraguay conflict, the revolts in Mexico, etc.—in which Indian peasants and Latin-Indian workers kill one another on behalf of Wall Street and Whitehall.

Will the Soviet Union cease to be a Socialist Republic? Will it expel the Communist International? Will the latter give up its world revolutionary activity? Will American imperialism cease to win markets and world dominion from British im-

perialism? It is the answers to these questions which determine the policy of the parties of British imperialism. "Rationalisation?" says someone. Let British capitalism, somewhat late in the day, *and with a working class which has had the experience of the General Strike*, try conclusions with its rivals at that game! For one step which British imperialism can make in capitalist rationalisation, France and Germany will make two, and the United States three. The race to war is only being speeded up by the rationalisation drive.

§ 3.—*More Realities*

"But is the Labour Party to such an extent a party of British imperialism? Has it really accepted the main principles of imperialism so completely?"

Let us set aside all memories of the Tory-Liberal-Labour coalition, the recruiting speeches, the munitions agreements, during the imperialist war of 1914-18. Let us take a few typical illustrations from the practice of the Labour Party during the last five years.*

In 1924, as is well known, the Labour Government made arrangements to proclaim a state of emergency, to appoint Wedgwood as Chief Civil Commissioner, to mobilise naval ratings, etc., on the occasion of a London traffic strike. Against whom? Against the workers: to be exact, in order to "give protection to those engaged in legal occupations" In May, 1926, MacDonald explains in Parliament that he was "against General Strikes and Bolshevism and that sort of thing," while Thomas said: "In a challenge to the Constitution, God help us unless the Government won." In the insistence that strike-breakers are "legal," that "Bolshevism" is illegal, that the "Constitution" must be protected, lies the recognition of the capitalist State as something above all class disputes. From this it was only a logical step, in 1928, to measures for ensuring the well-being of the capitalist State by stopping industrial disputes. For the workers to give up industrial disputes means that they accept intensified capitalist exploitation without a murmur. Two leaders of the "industrial peace" movement—Ben Turner and Lord Londonderry—have just shown at Batley and Dawdon respectively the fruits which their promises bring to the workers. But the Labour Party has endorsed "industrial peace" because its prime concern is the safety

* More are given in comrade Grove's pamphlet, "Four Years of Labour 'Opposition'" (C.P.G.B. 1d.)

of the capitalist State, and not the class interests of the workers ("Bolshevism and that sort of thing").

And what could be more eloquent of the policy of the future Labour Government than MacDonald's declaration on March 15th of this year?: "We are determined to reduce as quickly as possible the present roll of unemployment until it has come down to the margin of temporary unemployment, the outs and ins, *which is essential to the capitalist system.*"

As for foreign policy, there are equally illuminating statements on record. Thus, for example, it is well known that India is held by force: we have it on the high authority of Sir William Joynson-Hicks. No example is known to history when the rule of force was overthrown otherwise than by force. And in January, 1924, MacDonald told India plainly: "No party in Great Britain will be cowed by threats of force; and if any sections in India are under the delusion that this is not so, events will very sadly disappoint them." So that India might just as well reconcile itself to eternal control by British imperialism, so far as the Labour Party is concerned: for the Bengal Ordinances, approved by the Labour Government, were certainly not an indication that it proposed other means than force of holding India. Sir Austen Chamberlain told the Egyptian Government in 1927—also with many admiring references to the policy of MacDonald in 1924—"the fundamental requirements of British policy are common to all parties in this State, and a change of government makes no alteration in them." MacDonald in 1928 used almost the same words in sending a similar message to the Indian Nationalist movement which was opposing the Simon Commission.

Identity of policy of the three "established" political parties, continuity, concern for the same capitalist interests as the Tories and Liberals—these points have been stressed again and again by the Labour Party. What caused the rupture of the Anglo-Soviet diplomatic negotiations in 1924? The Labour Government's too zealous defence of *the British capitalists whose factories had been nationalised without compensation by the Russian workers.* What was Clynes' chief concern on March 8th, 1927, in the Parliamentary debate on sending troops to intervene against the Chinese revolution? To assure his audience that the Labour Party rejected any word or declaration "that can be construed as in any sense *dangerous to the national interests,*" an assurance which Pethick Lawrence hastened to explain by the declaration that "we

equally with the hon. members opposite are glad that *profits and successful interests* are built up by British traders in China.

It is clear that the Labour Party regards the interests of the British factory owner and merchant abroad as equivalent to the interests of the nation. And again, what could be more eloquent than Snowden's passionate declaration on April 17th, 1929, during the Budget debate: "I am not content to see my country and my people bled white." What was he denouncing? Was it the National Debt of nearly £8,000,000,000, of which seven-eighths are held inside the country? Was he objecting to the annual bleeding of the British workers, to the extent of over £300,000,000 out of a total debt charge of £365,000,000, for the benefit of British bondholders? No, that was quite in order. Mr. Snowden was objecting because the French and Italian workers and peasants are only being bled white to the tune of the annual interest on £1,048,000,000, instead of £1,160,000,000 as he claims they owe "us."

No wonder Sir C. Trevelyan (ex-Minister of Education in the Labour Government) told a meeting on April 19th: "The honour and obligations of this country are as safe in the hands of the Labour Party as in the hands of any other party, *and even safer.*"

"And even safer"! There we have the reply to the question as to whether a Labour Government will be only a puppet of British imperialism, or its most zealous champion at home and abroad.

§ 4.—*Towards War*

"But think of popular feeling! A Labour Government would never dare . . ."

Yes, think of popular feeling! Think of the tremendous wave of popular feeling that swept the Liberals into power in 1906. A popular revolt against the long Tory reaction from 1895 onwards: a working-class demonstration against the crippling restrictions on trade unionism, in the first years of British imperialist decline: a mass demand for social improvements in an era of falling real wages: a revulsion of feeling against the blatant imperialism which fought the Boer War and made an ally of Tsardom: and, of course, a sweeping Radical programme of legislation put forward by the Liberal Party.

Some of the social improvement legislation was carried out, in a form, of course, harmless to capitalism—Old Age Pensions, Health Insurance, the Trades Disputes Act, and so forth. But this did not prevent the Liberals from intensifying the policy of

repression in the colonies, both in Egypt and in India (1906 onwards), signing the Anglo-Russian Convention for the partition of Persia (1907), coming to an agreement with the Tsar for the break-up of European Turkey (1908), supporting the Italian conquest of Tripoli and the Russian occupation of Northern Persia (1911), and supporting the militarist dictator Yuan-Shi-Kai against the Chinese revolution (1912). Nor did it prevent them entering into the secret and unofficial "conversations" with the French naval and military staffs, which, although merely "conversations," resulted in 1912 in a definite agreement about co-operation against Germany. And this despite the fact that ceremonious foolery, intended only to deceive the masses, like the solemn opening of an international "Peace Palace" at the Hague, went on to the last.

Once it is clear that the Labour Party is a party of imperialism, that its leaders are just as "socialist" as Asquith and Winston Churchill were in 1906, that they work and fight for the defence of the British Empire, not for the class interests of the workers, there can be no room for doubt as to the road they will follow. That is, if they are allowed, *i.e.*, if they get a stable majority *or* if they can come to a working agreement with the Liberals, *or* if the rising tide of class struggle outside Parliament does not blow the Empire sky-high.

There is an interesting entry for July 22nd, 1914, in the diary of Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, the last enemy of British imperialism from the ranks of the landed aristocracy, and a champion to the last of the independence of India, Egypt, Ireland, Persia and the other colonial countries. He records his first meeting with Ramsay MacDonald, then "sufficiently anti-imperialist." Blunt writes: "I asked him whether, if the democracy really got into power in England, the Labour Party and the Socialists would continue to be anti-imperialist. He said, 'I think they would, but I understand your doubt.'" Fifteen years later MacDonald joined with the whole Labour Party in applauding the declaration by J. H. Thomas (April 18th, 1929): "There was no essential Party difference as to the unity, the development and the prosperity of the British Empire," and the indignant denial by W. Lunn (formerly Under-Secretary to the Board of Trade in MacDonald's Government) that "the Labour Party was any less an Empire Party than any other party in the House." There was no longer any doubt.

This "Empire Party," if put in office, will proceed to prepare war as its forerunner, the Liberal Party, did. First, doubtless, some minor concessions to working-class opinion—including,

possibly, the formal restoration of relations with the Soviet Union. Even less than in 1924, however, will this mean a real step towards coming to a settlement with Russia: for in 1924 the trade union bureaucracy were playing "left," and responding to the mass demand for pressure on the Government, while to-day they are ranged openly and solidly with the capitalists. Maybe some actor's trick, such as MacDonald has long yearned for—an International Disarmament Conference, or similar occasion for the limelight. But parallel with these, and with similar moves in home policy, will go on the savage repression of the emancipation movements in the colonies, the batoning of strikes and unemployed at home, the piling up of tanks, battleships, aeroplanes, poison gas. Deeper underground, the war staffs will get on with their plans and their world-wide espionage, the Foreign Office agents will continue their diplomatic intrigues and conversations, of which they first began to learn the technique at Eton and Harrow, and the Home Office machine will continue its "emergency" arrangements and its spying in working-class organisations. After the first months, interminable "negotiations" with the Soviet Union, interminable "conversations" about disarmament with the U.S.A. —and increasing friction, incidents, propaganda Notes, until some day the final spark reaches the magazine. And it will all be for the preservation of the "Constitution," the maintenance of the "unity" of the British Empire, and against "General Strikes and Bolshevism and that sort of thing."

"A Labour Government would never dare . . ."? Perhaps not, during their first six months. But give them a chance to get settled down in the comfortable security of office, to get their hand in at repression and defence of imperial interests—give them their taste of blood, so to speak—and they will show you what they dare.

§ 5.—*Precautions*

It is idle to attempt to repeat here the methods of struggle against the war danger which the Communist International and the Communist Party have set forth in many documents, and, moreover, teach by example even more than by precept. It also follows as a matter of course that every Communist candidate, every Communist speaker, every Communist canvasser, and every Communist wherever he can reach the workers, must bring out clearly that the Labour Party is a war party, that the Labour Government will be a war government, and that only a party which fights capitalism and imperialism without compromise is

worthy of the support of the working class. The numerous industrial struggles which are springing up in district after district, in the very midst of the General Election campaign, afford excellent opportunities of driving home the moral of the united front between the reformists and the capitalists which faces *all* those whom British imperialism oppresses or threatens, and which must therefore lead to new imperialist wars.

But there are certain particular dangers to be fought against amongst the more advanced workers, and even in our own ranks. First, under-estimation of the imperialist transformation of the Labour Party, and of the *militant* imperialist role which a Labour Government will play. Secondly, under-estimation of the fundamental antagonism between British imperialism and the Soviet Union, and in particular of the specific and peculiar danger threatening the Soviet Union from a Labour Government, precisely because of the mass illusions which exist about the Labour Party. Thirdly (and born of this under-estimation), insufficient appreciation of the need to knock on the head every lie about the Soviet Union, political conditions, economic progress, etc., that comes our way. Fourthly, failure to notice sufficiently quickly ourselves, and to bring to the notice of the workers, the opening up of the road to war with the U.S.S.R. whenever a spark of revolt blazes up in or around the frontiers of the British Empire.

Fifthly, there is a great danger that we do not sufficiently recognise the subtle hand of anti-American propaganda in the news served up in the daily press. British imperialism does not prepare its war with the U.S.A. in the same coarse and brutal way that it works against the Soviet Union. But what is the meaning of the columns of details of the Sacco and Vanzetti case in such papers as the "Times"? What does it mean when the "Daily Telegraph" prints long and sympathetically worded messages about police brutality during the Pennsylvania miners' strike? What does it mean when such papers as the "Manchester Guardian" print elaborate details of Sandino's fight for Nicaraguan independence? What does it mean when the "Daily Herald" publishes a series of patronising and slightly ironical articles about American life and customs from the pen of a notorious reformist leader? Have the capitalist papers suddenly become champions of political justice, industrial liberty, the freedom of small nationalities, etc., in the world at large? No, but it means that they are working up the "moral" indignation against the war-time—just as they used Prussianism, and the Zabern incident, and the corruption of the

officer clique, and even the dullness of German professors, to work up feeling against Germany in various groups of society in the last years before 1914.

And what machinery more suitable than a *Labour Government* to finally launch a world crusade for the freedom of small nations (in Latin-America), for industrial liberty (in the U.S.A.), for the protection of civilisation against (American) barbarism, and so forth?

Therefore, on this ticklish ground (and a survey of even the revolutionary press during the past 18 months will show how ticklish it is) it behoves us particularly to watch our step. The fight for preparations against the peril of a new imperialist war is a daily and an hourly necessity, and the possible coming of a Labour Government doubles and trebles the obligation.

Strike Strategy and Tactics

By T. BELL

[*At the June Plenum of the C.I. this year an important item on the agenda is the question of "Strike Strategy and Tactics" and "The Organisation of the Unorganised." The Lodz strike, the Ruhr struggle, events in Czecho-Slovakia, and a whole series of strike movements throughout the world have raised a number of new problems for discussion. A Preparatory Commission has been set up to prepare materials for the Plenum. Already a number of meetings have been held. In the course of the discussion the questions raised turned upon the role of the existing unions, and strike movements involving the unorganised; how strikes should be prepared, and what to do after the strikes with the strike committees and the unorganised workers who take part in them. Shall they go into the old unions? Shall we organise new unions? In what way shall we retain them in organisation? The following speech at the third session of the Commission by comrade Bell deals with a number of points raised in the discussion.*—EDITOR.]

COMRADES, I get the impression from the discussion that we are considering many questions which are elementary for our ordinary Communist activity in trade union work. I understand and recognise that we are in a new period, and that there are many new problems before the revolutionary workers in the trade union movement and in the Communist Parties. Some of these new problems will probably call for a readjustment of our tactical opproach to some questions, but I cannot understand why we should have so much polemics on many questions which to me are fundamental elementary problems of trade union activity.

Comrade Piatnitsky raises the question of our trade union work and the organisation of the unorganised. He says that it is necessary to begin with a certain series of countries, and quotes France, Czecho-Slovakia and Germany. He says that we must discuss these particular countries because there we have our own unions. But, comrades, it seems to me that this is too limited a view. This approach rules out the possibility of doing anything

in any other country until we have set up revolutionary unions. This would rule out, for example, England, America, Canada and a whole series of countries on the assumption that because we have not our own unions there, therefore we should not pay any immediate attention to them.

Why cannot we do anything in these other countries? What about the miners, the automobile workers, the lumbermen and the textile workers in North America? Even in slow-going England we have made a certain beginning. The successes that we have had in North America and in England may not be so impressive as the movements in Lodz, in the Ruhr and in Bordeaux, but, nevertheless, I consider they are a very important beginning, and they bring to our movement many rich experiences which it would be a mistake to ignore. It is true that in England our forces are not great, but we have a certain influence in the trade union movement. It is necessary to understand that in this period we are face to face with many new problems which in their solution can bring to our movement rich practical experiences which will help the workers in other countries.

Some Experiences in England

In England the situation is such that in the basic industries the old unions are being considerably weakened, numbers of workers are going away from the unions, and, relatively speaking, the number of unorganised is increasing, while the reformist apparatus is in complete open alliance with the bourgeoisie. In the newer industries we see going on a development on the basis of non-union labour. We see in these new industries company organisations, some taking the form of actual unions, others taking the form of works committees on which the workers sit side by side with the employers; others take the form of welfare committees. We see all manner of attempts being made to provide the workers with some semblance of organisation to keep them away from the active class unions, and to prevent any struggle against the conditions of rationalisation.

In the older craft unions of the heavy industry, the Communists are in danger of making a fetish of trade union work. This may be on account of the long historic traditions in England where the workers have a certain craft union complex. It is no uncommon thing to see the organised workers fight against or ignore the non-union elements in the workshops,and there are many occasions when the organised workers have gone on strike with-

out caring for the interest of the other workers. A failure of the Communists to throw off this fetish is to put a stress on trade union organisation. Where this emphasis on trade union organisation takes place we are in danger of isolating ourselves from the mass movement of the workers and dragging behind the various strike movements that are taking place from time to time.

But I want to put the question: Why cannot we in England develop unofficial strike action embracing the organised and unorganised workers? There is a considerable field for such activity in many of the areas in England where there are large areas of unorganised workers. I would like to quote three examples bearing on this particular point. First of all, we have a strike of miners at present in Durham, the Dawdon Colliery, where the miners on account of the rationalisation methods that are being adopted are subject to irritating deductions which reflect themselves in reduced wages. The workers have struck in defiance of the local and county officials. The trade union officials advised the workers to accept the terms, and they took a ballot upon the question. But by 1,050 votes against 750 the workers continued to remain on strike. In this situation our Party is striving to organise a strike committee, but here we are up against a problem. The strike is actually still in the hands of the local trade union officials. The Party while striving to get the workers to form a strike committee over the heads of the officials, seek to organise relief for the workers through the medium of the W.I.R. It also utilises the strike situation to drive home the lessons of the recent strike movement amongst the London clothing workers which was opposed by the national officials of the union. I might add, as a result of its activity the local Party organisation has gained some 45 members to the Communist Party.

In Birmingham we see a strike in the motor works as a result of the introduction of rationalisation methods. Here is a factory where 5,000 men have adopted a stay-in strike, adopted the method of remaining at their machines but refusing to operate them. The employers have tried, through the medium of the trade union officials, to impose an agreement upon the men, but since the majority of the workers are not in any union they have repudiated the trade union officials and have told them to keep their hands off the strike situation. The employers have now replied with a lock-out notice.

In the textile areas in recent times we have had a whole series of strikes conducted by the workers against many irritating

conditions imposed upon them by rationalisation. The workers have been led to strike in defiance of the union officials who have striven to keep them at work.

I might quote the case of the woodworkers, who have mandated their union officials to take strike action for increased wages, but the officials keep continually flirting with the constitutional methods of negotiation.

I quote these examples to prove that there are possibilities in England, and that will contribute rich experiences to the present discussion. That is why I think comrade Piatnitsky is wrong in trying to limit the examination of these problems to a few countries such as he mentioned. This policy which we see going on in England I would say applies also to countries where dual unions exist. We know that in France, Czecho-Slovakia and other countries, strikes are taking place in defiance of and over the heads of the union officials. It is therefore necessary that we should take the experiences of *every* country into serious consideration, and not limit our discussion.

How should Strikes be Prepared?

Comrade Piatnitsky raises the question of how should strikes be prepared? And he gives us a whole series of rules with regard to strike committees, etc. Comrade Piatnitsky here again is speaking of the situation in one country, Germany. I feel that his contribution on this question is too mechanical. I get the same impression from the document circulated entitled: "Lessons of the German Struggles." In that document no attempt is made to analyse the concrete question of strike action. I think this is a pre-requisite for clarity. How does a strike situation develop? First of all there must be concrete basic grievances on the part of the workers. Our comrades in the course of their daily work should utilise those grievances to convince the workers of our general Communist line, to explain the causes behind those grievances, and to rouse the workers into action. If we are not merely book Communists this propaganda and agitation should be part of our daily work. And in the measure that our propaganda grows, the strength and the confidence of the workers will grow in the direction of action. What next must we do? The Communists must prepare and call mass meetings of *all* the workers, whether organised or unorganised. In some cases, where the trade union is very strong (and this applies particularly to England, where there is a strong trade union movement) it may be better

to call a preliminary meeting of the union members alone, in order to convince them of the importance of bringing in the unorganised workers. This meeting should appoint a strike committee, whose duty should be to take all possible steps to secure first a 100 per cent. stoppage in the particular shop or industry or area, whichever the case may be. This means drawing in the unorganised into the strike committee. It must take steps to enlarge the area of the strike and to put the maximum of pressure on the employers. Its primary duty is to consolidate the ranks of the workers and to provide for the needs of the strikers. It is elementary that the first duty of the strike committee is to raise funds. In England this is a common practice. I have recollections during the miners' lock-out that, without any direct guidance from the Communists, the workers instinctively organised immediately their pipe bands and singing choirs to go to London, to go to Aberdeen and to other areas that were not affected by the strike, in order to collect substantial funds to send back into the stricken areas to provide food for the strikers and their families, to ensure the ranks were not being broken by means of economic pressure. I think it is also important for the strike committee to secure an Information Bureau for the purpose of keeping the workers informed of all daily activities connected with the strike. This is necessary to counteract the lies of the capitalist press and to keep the ranks intact and for developing mass action. Another important activity is the provision of entertainment for the more backward workers who are always restless under strike conditions, and anxious to grasp at any excuse for believing there is going to be a settlement. These are elementary things, in my opinion, which every strike committee must do.

Should Strike Committees be Retained or Dissolved?

Comrade Piatnitsky raised the question: Should the strike committees be dissolved after the strike movement has ended? I say on this question that much depends upon the character of the strike and the composition of the strikers. If the strike consists of a majority of trade union workers then we should do everything possible to draw whatever non-union elements there are in the vicinity into the union. I quote an example of a recent dispute among the railway carriage workers, where the workers went on strike demanding the reinstatement of one of their comrades who had been dismissed. In the meantime the workers had wired for the union organiser to come down to settle the dispute. While

waiting for the organiser the active trade union workers began canvassing among the non-union men to get them to join the union, and consolidate the ranks. When the organiser came down not only did they have the non-union men into the union, but they also refused to allow the organiser to interview the employers without having their delegates with them.

This might appear to some comrades as a policy of strengthening the reformist union. I entirely agree with comrade Lozovsky that it is not our principal job to strengthen the reformist unions. But I think, as in the example I have just quoted, that you cannot oppose such action even if it means leading the workers into the reformist union. Such militant action as I have illustrated here can be a case not only of bringing non-union workers into the union, but such militant action can be carried into the union and mobilised against the trade union bureaucracy.

If, to take the other side, the majority of the strikers are unorganised, we may be too weak to form a new union. In such cases we could transform the strike committee into a committee for action. Such a committee for action may and can be affiliated to the National Minority Movement, and the Minority Movement would then explore the possibilities of linking up this committee for action with other kindred sections, and thus lay the foundations for a new organisation.

Comrade Piatnitsky is absolutely correct in saying that there is a tendency after every strike for a certain degeneracy to set in. Everyone who has had experience in this connection knows that that is absolutely correct. I can quote from my own experience in connection with unofficial strike movements. I once took part in leading an unofficial strike which lasted three weeks. As soon as the purpose for which the strike had been called had been met our attempts to maintain the unofficial strike committee in being was absolutely impossible. This was particularly the case because the workers had strong roots in the trade union organisation. I could quote dozens of similar cases. It may be much simpler where there is no trade union organisation. I have taken part in such a strike movement. We had the same experience. After the strike it was almost impossible to hold any but the most class-conscious elements. This is not an argument to show how impossible it is to organise the unorganised, but it is necessary for us to be under no illusion. We have a very big task in trying to hold the workers together after a strike has been settled. Of course, we are not in favour of strengthening the reformist unions.

But we must provide some form of organisation to retain the workers who have been brought into active struggle against the employers. I think we cannot be content with merely sending the unorganised to the W.I.R., to the Red Front, to the I.C.W.P.A. or into any such organisations. The workers must have an industrial organisation to fight their battles inside the workshop.

Factory Committees and Trade Unions

Comrade Piatnitsky says that the factory committees and the unions are not the same thing. In this connection I think he is quite right. There are cases in industries where we have as many as ten different unions. In such cases the factory committee can be two things. In the first instance it can be a fighting organisation that will wage the daily struggles of the workers against the employers. In the second instance it can be a unifying organ, and can help to promote the amalgamation of the workers in those ten industries into a single organisation. These two functions, of course, are not opposites to each other. In my opinion the factory committees should not be regarded as an alternative organisation for the trade unions. Indeed, the factory committees may lead to the establishment of new unions by the development of their fighting qualities. They are not alternatives to the unions, but we are not against their developing into new unions. I think it is necessary for us to take note of the whole process of the development of new unions. In my opinion it is important to understand that this is a process, and must not be approached in an abstract manner.

I am in agreement with comrade Lozovsky that, so far as our new tactics are concerned, these are rooted in this new period. The characteristics of this new period have been outlined by the Fourth Congress of the R.I.L.U. and the Sixth Congress of the Comintern. Chiefly these characteristics are a rapid rationalisation, a simplification of the labour processes, a speeding up and ruthless exploitation of the workers. As a consequence of this, particularly in England, we see the elimination of tens of thousands of workers, especially in the engineering and mining industries. In cotton textiles and the engineering industries we see a tremendous pressure being put on the workers, an increase of unskilled labour, of the labour of women and young workers, who were formerly excluded from particular occupations, but who are now under rationalisation, being drawn into industry. Here we see the possibilities for the organisation of new unions of the

workers. We see here a wide field for our Party activity and for the development of the direct leadership of the Party in these struggles.

Fetish of Legalism

Comrade Lozovsky is correct in denouncing the fetish of legalism in our Parties. We must remember, however, that the conquest of the unions was emphasised at the First, Second and Third Congresses of the Comintern. At repeated Enlarged Executives we have had it drilled into our Parties that they must go to the masses and drive for the conquest of the unions the mass organisations of the workers. In the fight for the control of the trade union organisations our Parties have many achievements to their credit. The fetishism which has grown up out of this policy will not disappear in a single day. This does not mean that we excuse any such fetishism. But we must understand that the backwardness, in this new period, the vacillations and the difficulties of many of our Parties to manœuvre correctly is largely due to their inability to throw off this fetishism in a single day.

In England, for example, our comrades have considerable experience as trade union workers. Yet we have seen how difficult it has been to break from this legal fetishism, especially in Scotland, to which reference has been made by comrade Yusefovitch. For two years we have been fighting against the reformist officials in Scotland. We gained certain successes, but I think we did not realise to the full the implications of the resolutions of the Fourth Congress of the R.I.L.U. It is quite apparent now that we dragged too long with the constitutional methods. We under-estimated the fighting strength of the reformists. As a result the reformists were able to utilise their positions to sabotage our efforts by means of the law courts, by dismissing the Communist leaders, and by securing the backing of the bureaucrats of the M.F.G.B. Now we see signs of a changed attitude and a changed situation. The Party is throwing off this fetishism and cloak of legality and striking a new line.

Trade Unions, Leaders, and Masses

Comrade Lozovsky says that the trade unions organised by the social-democrats are the most backward and the most reactionary sections of the working class. I think this is absolutely wrong. The reformist leaders, of course, are reactionary, the politically conscious partisans of those leaders are also reactionary. But it is necessary for us to separate the less active workers who

are following those particular leaders from the leaders themselves. It is necessary to draw a distinction between those workers who are only developing politically from the reactionary leaders and their political partisans. I think we cannot agree with comrade Lozovsky when he insists that the social-democratic trade unions are the most backward and reactionary sections of the working class.

Of course, comrade Lozovsky is right when he says that a trade union is not the same thing as the working class. We must strive to win those backward workers over to our side, whether they are within the union or outside. It may be that outside the union we can have very big successes. We are not interested in supporting the reformist trade unions. But supposing we are unable to get at the more politically backward workers from the outside; if the only way to get at those workers is from inside the organisations, then we should not hesitate to go into those organisations even if they are reformist unions.

Inside these organisations we should strive to develop minority opposition groups. A strike movement can provide the means for us through these minority groups of winning them away from the reformist unions and leading them in the direction of new organisations. I am of the opinion we cannot simply split them away from the reformist organisations before we have some central nucleus of organisation. We must choose the time when to split them away and form our new revolutionary organisations.

Already the reformists fear the influx of the unorganised workers into the trade unions. Amsterdam is already drawing attention through its bulletins to the danger of the new Communist tactic, as it is described, of flooding the old organisations with unorganised and "undisciplined" workers. (Comrade Lozovsky: "That proves our tactic is correct.") It is true that our tactic is right, and it proves that we should not hesitate to go with those unorganised workers into the old unions in order to win them away from the unions of the reformists.

I believe that we must strive to organise the unorganised along the lines I have indicated. Our fundamental task is to develop unofficial action, particularly in those countries where we have strong trade union traditions in the old unions. We have still a big field of activity, and we should not ignore it. Our activity in these unions should be supplementary to our general revolutionary activity.

On the Lessons of May 1st

> "Die Maifeier ist nicht nur eine Heerschau, sondern auch eine Kriegserklarung, und an diesem Tage muss unser Kampfruf sein: Krieg dem Kriege!"—(Karl Kautsky in the "Neue Zeit," May, 1893.)
>
> ("The May Day celebration is not only a mobilisation, but also a declaration of war. On this day our battle-cry must be: War against war!")

THE German "Vorwärts" is jubilant. According to this paper, which fulfils the two functions of serving as the mouthpiece of the Social-Democratic Party and of the Berlin police, all the problems connected with the bloody struggles of May 1st are settled and solved by the approval of the report of the chief of police by a meeting of the Berlin functionaries of the Social-Democratic Party. The composition and mentality of this meeting of functionaries (many of them State functionaries) can be gauged by the fact that the blood-stained chief of police was introduced by the chairman of the meeting as "comrade Mr. Chief of Police Zörgiebel"!

There is no need, however, to dwell on this meeting nor on its estimation as given by "Vorwärts." There was a time when "Vorwärts" played a leading part not only as the socialist paper of Germany, but as the most important organ of the international socialist movement. After the days of August, 1914, "Vorwärts" tried its very best to become a respectable patriotic bourgeois paper. It has not succeeded. Old bourgeois papers of Liberal reputation like the "Frankfürter Zeitung" and the "Manchester Guardian" would consider it an insult to attempt to compare them with "Vorwärts," which has actually degenerated into a banal police sheet of the cheapest kind. There is no danger of the workers being led astray by this police rag. The great events of May 1st and the days following, which go far beyond the German frontiers, have left a deep impression upon the workers, who will study these eventful days in order to assimilate their lessons and to prepare for the battles in front. The lessons of these days are manifold, but in this article an endeavour will be made to deal with three main aspects, namely: (*a*) the strategy of the social-democrats

in the struggle against the May Day demonstrations; (*b*) the tactics of the social-democrats; and (*c*) the reaction of the militant workers.

An objective analysis of these three questions is possible only on the assumption that there are no doubts as to the *purpose* of the social-democrats in their attack on the Red May Day. It is true the German social-democrats themselves have brought forward a tremendous number of contradictory statements in their endeavour to explain the ban on the May Day demonstrations. But all these lying interpretations cannot conceal the real aims and purpose underlying this action of the social-democrats, which we can briefly summarise as follows:

(1) The German social-democrats, as all other social-democrats, hate and fear the May Day demonstrations for the simple reason that this working-class holiday is a living and striking monument of all the crimes they have committed against the working class. The more a national social-democratic party is linked up with the capitalist State apparatus, the more it has betrayed its own past, the more it hates and fears the revolutionary May Day.

(2) The social-democrats know perfectly well the truth of Kautsky's words quoted above, as well as the meaning of the resolutions of the first Congresses of the Second International concerning the importance of May Day. May 1st is the day of the mobilisation of the class forces of the proletariat in its struggle against capitalism. But the German bourgeoisie are to-day concerned not only in squeezing huge sums from the workers for reparation purposes, but they also desire, through the intensification of exploitation, to acquire a sufficient amount of capital for the purposes of export and for imperialist expansion. This ambition requires a docile working class ready to follow the dictates of the dominant classes. The mobilisation of the workers under the banners and slogans of May 1st cuts across these aims of the ruling class, the carrying through of which has become the most important function of the German Social-Democratic Party.

(3) May 1st is first and foremost a declaration of "war against war." But Germany is preparing for war. The German Social-Democratic Party is the party of armed cruisers.

(4) Apart from reparations and other questions, the Social-Democratic Party had particular reason this year to fear the May Day demonstrations. They were perfectly well aware that the demonstrations on May 1st, 1929, after the elections of the factory

councils, were bound to become demonstrations not only against the ruling classes, but against their most important pillar, the Social-Democratic Party. Such a demonstration would be a death blow to the Social-Democratic Party, whose officials derive their positions and incomes from the fact that they pose as the party of the working class.

All these factors outlined above were sufficient to induce the German Social-Democratic Party to undertake everything possible and impossible to crush the May Day demonstrations. The fact that they confined themselves to Berlin is neither their merit nor their fault. They were simply too weak to undertake a crusade against the celebrations of May Day all over the country, and they rightly decided that a successful blow against the Berlin workers would have the greatest political significance for them. Their efforts were therefore concentrated in organising this blow.

Now let us see what was the strategy of the Social-Democratic Party in organising their attack upon the May Day demonstrations, which meant, in effect, an attack upon the militant workers of the German capital. It is sufficient just to peruse the pages of "Vorwārts" and its evening edition for the weeks preceding May 1st for convincing proof that the social-democrats were prepared to use the worst kind of demagogy, leaving a long way behind them the party of Mussolini in the first years of its existence. While demagogy played an important part in the preparation of the attack against the May Day demonstrations, the strategical plan of the social-democrats can be defined in the following main categories:

(1) *The division of the workers.*—The period prior to the 1st of May—the day of working-class unity—found the social-democrats mobilising all their resources and all their energy with a view to splitting the working-class forces, and in order to create an abyss between the militant workers and those who still follow the lead of the socialists and of the social reformists in the trade unions. The object of the closed trade union meetings was to divide the working-class forces and to isolate all the active working-class elements who desired to remain loyal to the traditions and to the slogans of May 1st.

(2) *Terrorising threats and slanders.*—The social-democrats, unable to rely upon their moral strength, resorted to threatening the workers with the combined forces and resources of the State. These threats were made partly openly and partly in a disguised form. Of all their lies and slanders, the most unscrupulous was

the legend they spread that the Communists wanted the shedding of blood, and that they were counting on at least 200 dead bodies. The purpose of the social-democrats in spreading this malicious slander was to prepare the workers for the shedding of blood, and to create the atmosphere in advance to enable them to accuse the Communists of being responsible for the slaying of their followers by the social-democratic police. Such devices are used either in the time of war or in the time of mobilisation for war. Well, the social-democrats were preparing for war against the workers.

(3) *Attacks upon the U.S.S.R.*—Not only the chief of police Zörgiebel, but the Social-Democratic Party itself tried to persuade the workers that the idea of organising a May Day demonstration emanated from the "Moscow Dictators." For 17 years the workers of Germany have celebrated the 1st May before the U.S.S.R. was in existence. As a matter of fact, the Russian workers during that period were called upon to follow the example of the German workers and to celebrate this working-class holiday. But in 1929 the May Day demonstration became a Moscow invention! But this unscrupulous demagogy was necessary for the simple reason that the attack upon the May Day demonstrations was actuated not only by the need to defend class collaboration, but also for the preparation of imperialist wars in general, and the armed intervention in coalition with other "Great Powers" against the First Workers' Republic.

The general outlook and attitude of the social-democrats was summed up by Karl Kautsky in the front-page article of the May 1st issue of "Vorwärts." According to Kautsky, the social-democrats have no further use for May 1st; the eight-hour day is already established (if that is the case, why so much noise about the Washington Hours Convention?); peace is safeguarded by the League of Nations (about armaments and secret war treaties Kautsky keeps silent), and the only spot on the sun is the proletarian dictatorship in the Soviet Union! While the social-democratic theoretician can find only one enemy, the social-democratic policeman, Zörgiebel, made vehement pronouncements against two enemies—Moscow and the German militant workers. Even some social-democratic papers compared him with the notorious Jagow. But this is an insult to the old Prussian chief of police of Wilhelm's time. Jagow defended his class without using social camouflage and without quoting non-existing documents.

On May 1st the Social-Democratic Party, the party of capitalist rationalisation, the party of peace with the capitalist and war

against the German workers and against the Workers' Republic, showed not only in words, but in deeds, how it fought against the celebration of the fortieth anniversary of the great historic working-class holiday. The tactics employed by the social-democrats in these days of May can be summed up as follows:

(1) The closed meetings organised by the social reformist trade unions were held in the morning of May 1st. Notwithstanding the strict registration that was applied at all these meetings, the social-democrats and the police headquarters talk of their being successful but without mentioning any figures. But apart from the number of workers who participated, it is common knowledge that these meetings were held under a triple watch. The meetings themselves were under the strict surveillance and vigilance of the platform, composed of well-trained bureaucrats, with the aid of the young social-democratic guards, while outside watch was kept by the agents of Zörgiebel, who were ready armed to crush ruthlessly any attempt at opposition. It is the sheerest humbug to describe these meetings as celebration meetings; they were rather mourning meetings. Brandler, whose paper in the days before and after May 1st, obligingly provided "Vorwärts" with "striking arguments" against the Communists, maintained that those meetings were the best place for Communist agitation. One can only wonder why he and his friends did not venture to invade the precincts of the "celebration" meetings organised by Zörgiebel's friends. Obviously, Brandler preferred that the Communists should be beaten up and arrested at those meetings rather than he and his colleagues.

(2) Afraid to rely too much upon the "great numbers" present at their meetings, the social-democrats took the precaution to display a tremendous force of police. The city of Berlin was occupied by a long living chain of policemen, who were well armed, and who had at their disposal groups of police in motor cars and motor lorries, mounted and on foot, ready and prepared for any emergency. In the words of "Die Weltbühne" (a petty-bourgeois weekly), the display of police forces gave the impression of civil war in full swing. Thus, on the day when social-democrats are called upon by their own congresses to organise a display of working-class forces, the Kautskys and Zörgiebels produced a great mobilisation of the forces defending the bourgeois State!

(3) The police force was displayed not to threaten but to act. A tremendous amount of evidence has been brought forward from all sides proving the brutality and the provocative methods of the

police. The testimony of Siegfried Jacoby, Einstein's former secretary, who was murderously beaten at 11 o'clock in the morning, when it would be difficult to argue that the police were overstrained and nervy, is sufficient evidence to form the strongest indictment against Zörgiebel's agents. As was summed up in the Reuter message "that Mr. Mackay was shot dead by the police without the slightest reason," one can say that already in the first hours of May 1st hundreds and hundreds of men became acquainted with the sticks and guns of the Berlin police "without the slightest reason."

(4) The tactics of the Berlin police can be best studied in comparison with the defenders of "law and order" in Paris on the same day. Also in Paris all the laws of bourgeois democracy were trampled under foot. Hundreds and thousands of men, including members of parliament, were arrested in the most arbitrary way. Nevertheless, all the efforts of both police and troops were directed to prevent any demonstrations in the streets. In Berlin we witnessed another picture. Here the police were bent, not on threatening the workers, but on completely crushing them and *punishing* them. From the early hours of the morning the police force of Berlin acted as a punitive expedition. The days following the 1st May were only a continuation of those tactics, confined to the working-class districts, Wedding and Neukölln. The events of these days make it quite clear that the chairman of the Berlin social-democratic functionaries knew what he was taking about when he referred to "dead bodies." He only concealed the real source of his information. Instead of referring to the plans of the police, he spoke about the "wishes" of the Communists to become martyrs.

The social-democrats are proudly boasting that their action against the celebration of May Day was a great success. In order to prove this the Social-Democratic Party, serving the double funtion of pretending to be a workers' party, while at the same time acting as a police party of the capitalist State, presents us simultaneously with two versions. According to the first version, the workers did not follow the lead of the Communists, and there were no workers demonstrating on May 1st; the workers either went to the trade union meetings, stayed at home with their families, or finally simply worked as usual. At the same time, as a police party, they insist that the police were compelled to use weapons (not only batons, but guns, machine guns, armoured cars) against the disorderly "mobs" who defied their orders every-

where. Obviously the social-democrats will have to choose and to settle upon one of these two versions. If the first version is correct, and there were no demonstrators at all, then the police stand condemned not only from a working-class point of view, but from the point of view of simple efficiency. They wasted time, energy and public money to fight a non-existent enemy. But let the social-democrats themselves find a way out of the *impasse* to which they have driven themselves. For our part we are interested to see how the workers have reacted on May 1st and in the days following that historic date.

On May 1st the Berlin workers were confronted with a vast and brutal police force. In actual fact there were arrayed against them on that day a coalition of all the forces of the bourgeois State concentrated in the capital, and among which the social-democratic organisations played a conspicuous role. But did this intimidate the workers? Not in the least. Did they retreat? In no way. From early morning, not only in the working-class quarters but everywhere groups of workers assembled again and again, on many occasions unfurling their banners and defiantly shouting their slogans. Again and again the demonstrators all over the city were brutally dispersed, and those caught were either arrested and ill-treated, or simply mercilessly beaten. Still the workers did not leave the streets, they continued to fight for them, thus demonstrating that the ban was directed not against secret orders from Moscow, but against the active militant workers who were prepared to pay the highest price for their right to demonstrate on May Day.

Already in the early hours of May 1st, before even the workers had begun to organise resistance to the police terror, the revolutionary spirit of the Berlin proletariat began to reveal itself. The social-democrats were powerless either to canalise the May Day traditions through their trade union meetings or to stem the revolutionary discontent of the workers by police repression. Instead of quietness and order Berlin became an arena of struggles. The police were armed, but the militant workers were surrounded by the active sympathy of the toiling masses of the capital. That was the real situation in the early hours of the 1st of May.

The brutal handling of the demonstrators created widespread discontent, which found organised expression in the working-class quarters. Possessing no arms, the workers were nevertheless determined to stop the police from arbitrarily shooting at peaceful demonstrators. In the working-class districts of Wedding and

Neukölln, the workers erected barricades, uprooting for the purpose street-lamps, scaffolding, etc. It is many years now since Berlin has witnessed the erection of barricades, this symbol of the highest form of proletarian struggle.

The decision of the Communist Party to defy the arbitrary ban of Zörgiebel on the May Day demonstrations needs no moral justification. It was the duty of the Communists not to allow the ban to operate. In the old days the social-democrats of the Bebel period defied the ban of Jagow. The May Day events of this year show clearly that behind the defiance of Zörgiebel's ban were the great conscious forces of the workers of Berlin. More than on any previous occasion, May Day of 1929 in Berlin was a demonstration of the fighting spirit of the class-conscious workers.

The events in Wedding and Neukölln have shown something more. In these two working-class districts the workers displayed not only great courage and daring, but also endurance and resourcefulness. During two days and two nights these districts were in a state of siege. Confronted with machine guns and armoured cars in the hands of an enemy which showed no mercy, the workers fought with the greatest possible heroism. The remarkable resistance and endurance displayed by these unarmed workers against an enemy armed to the teeth will stand out as a striking example of revolutionary struggle.

The social-democrats have taken great care to suppress the knowledge of the heroic deeds of the Wedding and Neukölln workers being spread to the other sections of the workers. Zörgiebel has suspended the official organ of the German Communist Party, the "Rote Fahne," and the Government has declared the Red Front an illegal organisation, thus creating an atmosphere of Fascist reaction throughout the country. But great class struggles cannot be wiped out by police repression, even when this repression is carried through by trained social-democratic traitors.

The social-democrats are consoling themselves with the fact that the appeal of the Communists to support the heroes of Wedding and Neukölln not only by protest demonstrations but also by political strikes did not meet with a wholesale response. They maliciously choose to forget that every worker who went out on strike in sympathy with the workers of Wedding and Neukölln had against him not only all the forces of the State, but the machinery of the trade unions as well. The social-democratic press remains silent about those hundreds and thousands of workers

who were practically dismissed for expressing their solidarity with those who so courageously fought the Zörgiebel police. In such circumstances the sneering remarks of "Vorwärts" only show that the more the Social-Democratic Party becomes a police party, the less it understands the driving forces of the development of the class struggle.

It was hardly to be expected that the battles in Wedding and Neukölln would call forth immediately the fullest active support. Had such been the case it could only mean the beginning of open revolutionary struggle for power. For this the working class of Germany were not yet prepared. But the battles themselves mark an important stage in the preparation for the final and victorious revolutionary battles.

The social-democrats stand condemned as an open Fascist power, while the German working-class movement enters a new stage of its development under the leadership of the Communist Party

F. ROBERTS.

May 10th, 1929.

Our Monthly Review of Ideas and Books

A NOVEL OF MINING LIFE THAT FAILS

By GORE GRAHAM

The Gate of a Strange Field. Harold Heslop. Brentano, 7s. 6d.

Attention is given to this novel for two reasons: first, it deals with the life of our class in a capitalist country; and, second, it is written by a class-conscious worker from whom one naturally expects a seriousness of purpose and ambition. It is not a sociological novel nor a political one, but simply a tale of its hero, a north-country miner. With this hero the reader enters a typical working-class household, travels with him from a council school to the pit, follows his development into a full-fledged coal-hewer, observes his acquaintance with politics and his evolution into a trade union leader and socialist propagandist. We see him taking the usual lessons at the school of sex with the inevitable and long-since-grown-tedious conflicts with convention, the ignorance, the forced marriage, and the post-marital readjustments. After the hero has lived through the General Strike and the coal lock-out, the wife and the lover, he suffers a narrow escape in a pit accident, and then his story is closed to us.

Such a story which contains nothing that could not happen to any north-country proletarian—given unimportant alterations of course—depends more than ever for its success upon the manner of its telling, or of the uniqueness of its hero's reactions to such ordinary stimuli. Unfortunately for *The Gate of a Strange Field* neither of these conditions is fulfilled. The hero's reactions are the most ordinary, the manner of the telling is distinctly inferior, and the author possesses but a slight understanding of the real meaning of the environment surrounding his hero.

Take, for instance, Joe Tarrant's sexual adventures. His experiences in adolescence are described in a manner that produces the most irritable boredom. Not merely is the English full

of clichés, but the treatment of the subject is similar to what the present writer has been taught to expect from Ethel M. Dell.

> "They were at the opening of the valley of Sex. They peered in fearfully. Away it stretched before them, bound high on both sides by a forgotten convention. It was beautiful, unlit and care-free. Their life pulsed with life . . . above them the moon shone upon the earth in cold radiance. Perhaps she saw. . . . The world slipped away from them. . . . Molly knew she was doing wrong. . . . They closed in a love grasp."

No one on the look-out for good proletarian literature deserves stuff like that. When Mr. Heslop again feels like it he should leave the words out and just write the dots.

The sociological background to the story is indicated with no clearness whatever; the sketch of the environment of which Joe Tarrant is a part is confused and pointless. Similarly the hero's own evolution does not bring him to any conclusion. Just as he himself fails to crystallise his experiences so does the reader fail to see any point or conclusion in them. We had a right to expect far more from comrade Heslop. For he knows that his book is going to be regarded as an attempt at a proletarian novel, and shows it when he writes the following:

> "The South Marine Park is a glorious sight on a Sunday evening in the summer time. It is the rendezvous of Shielding's proletariat and, the proletariat is always glorious and interesting. Shielding's proletariat is always fortunate."

Comrade Heslop may write a story that is a "proletarian novel" in the sense that it deals with "Shielding's proletariat," and a story that contains no positive bourgeois moral such as the hero's successful acquirement of wealth, title, high-born bride, and what not. But these are the merest negative virtues which will bring comrade Heslop nowhere near being a proletarian writer. This story is *not* a proletarian novel. It is not even a good first attempt. It is far less worth while than most of those critical analyses of modern life and consciousness produced by talented bourgeois writers. Heslop's intellectual make-up as yet is merely a slightly-built mosaic made up of bourgeois material. How else could he assume his empty attitude of superiority towards working-class life, an attitude betrayed by sentences like the following, in which he describes his hero and heroine on the promenade?:

> "They were just in time to see the conductor of the band strike the music rest imperiously. The musicians began to play. They listened. It was just the same stereotyped rendering of Brahms' Hungarian Dances. They did not know what it was. Did not understand it even. To Molly it was noise, pleasant noise, needing very little interpretation. . . ."

In isolation this quotation may appear without significance, but together with others it reveals silly little bourgeois priggishness of Heslop's. Here it causes him to give a priggish respect to people who can listen to Brahms and know the name of the music, its intricacies, alleged meanings, etc. To poor proletarian Molly the music "was noise, pleasant noise." And from his heights comrade Heslop lets fall a sigh of sympathy. But what, after all, is music if not noise? It is never anything else but auditory stimuli, pleasant or otherwise according to the conditioning the hearer. Consequently an attitude like Heslop's simply reveals the possessor's own awful limitations.

The literary clichés which also at present burden comrade Heslop are further evidence of this superficial mosaic of bourgeois culture. He will never write notable work until he rids himself of the unending literary jargon. Why can't his hero simply *wash* instead of "performing his ablutions"? Why can't another character in this book simply *die* instead of "shuffling off this mortal coil"? And so on and so on.

Comrade Heslop set out with a world to gain. As far as he has gone with *The Gate of a Strange Field* he has gained nothing. He had working-class lives, a wealthy background of present-day capitalism, he had the General Strike—all this was his material and shame to say he has nothing to offer on any of these subjects that is worth the offering. All he can say is that when hundreds of miners are killed in a capitalist pit through carelessness of the profit-hunters, they have got their deliverance. Well, from our point of view, the last part of Heslop's book could not have a better title than the one he has given it, namely, *Deliverance*.

CLASS *against* CLASS

The General Election Programme of the Communist Party of Gt. Britain

Price ONE PENNY. 9d. per doz. post free

For the forthcoming General Election we recommend the following Pamphlets : on the Communist Party's Policy :

COMMUNISM IS COMMONSENSE. Price 2d.; per doz. 1/6 post free

MONDISM AND MACDONALDISM. ∴ By W. Gallacher. Price 1d.; per doz. 9d. post free

IS LABOUR LOST? By J. R. Campbell. An Analysis of "Labour and the Nation." Price 2d.; per doz. 1/6 post free

WORKERS' BOOKSHOP LTD., 16 KING STREET, COVENT GARDEN, LONDON, W.C.2

THE DORRIT PRESS